



NEWS RELEASE

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For More Information, Contact:
Krissie Guerard
Division of Disease Control
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.2378
E-mail: kguerard@nd.gov

Grand Forks Public Health
701.787.8100

Health Officials Provide Update on TB Outbreak Investigation in Grand Forks Area *Total number of active cases associated with outbreak now at 15*

BISMARCK, N.D. – Health officials are reporting two additional cases of active tuberculosis (TB) in the Grand Forks area, bringing the total number of active cases identified since October to 15.

Age	Cases		
Younger than 10	4		
10-19 years	1		
20-29 years	5	Gender	
30-39 years		Female	7
40-49 years	3	Male	8
50- 59 years	1		
60 and older	1		
Total Cases	15		15

Health officials continue to do contact investigations to identify people who may have been exposed to the active cases. Those who are considered at risk will be contacted and given guidance about testing procedures. Examples of groups that may be contacted include family members, coworkers, friends and roommates.

It's important to remember that not everyone infected with TB bacteria becomes sick. There are two different types of TB-related conditions: latent TB infection and TB disease. People with latent TB have the bacteria in their bodies, but they are not sick and cannot spread the TB bacteria to others. However, if TB bacteria become active in the body and multiply, the person will go from having latent TB to being sick with TB disease (referred to as active TB). Both

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Latent TB and TB disease are treatable. Those with TB disease are treated with several drugs for 6 to 9 months. The patient's doctor will monitor how the person is reacting to the treatment, and will do tests that will indicate when the person is no longer infectious. At that point, the person is able to return to normal activities including school and work.

Tuberculosis is a disease that is spread from person to person through the air when someone with TB disease has coughed or sneezed into the air, usually in an indoor environment. Exposure to tuberculosis includes frequent or prolonged exposure, such as sitting in a small room or confined area for a long period of time with someone who has active TB and is infectious. People are contagious when there is active disease in their lungs or throat that has not been treated. TB is not spread through clothes, dishes, floors or furniture.

Anyone can get TB. Individuals with weakened immune systems, including those with AIDS or those infected with HIV, are at increased risk. In the United States, the most common risk factors for TB are social factors, such as substance abuse, being incarcerated in a correctional facility, minority populations, being born in a country where TB is more common and homelessness.

The general symptoms of TB disease include feeling sick or weak, weight loss, fever and night sweats. The symptoms of TB of the lungs include productive, prolonged cough (duration of three weeks or longer), chest pain, and coughing up blood. It should be noted that symptoms usually develop gradually and last for a prolonged period of time. This is different than symptoms of the flu, which usually come on very suddenly and go away after a couple of days to a week. Anyone experiencing symptoms of TB should contact his or her health-care provider as soon as possible for an evaluation.

The most important way to stop the spread of tuberculosis is to cover the mouth and nose when coughing, and for those with TB to take the prescribed medication as directed. Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing. A vaccine for TB does exist, but is not routinely given in the United States because it is not very effective in protecting against the lung infection commonly found in adolescents and adults.

For more information, contact Krissie Guerard, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2378 or Grand Forks Public Health, at 701.787.8100. Information about this outbreak, including links to more information about TB, can found by visiting www.grandforksgov.com/publichealth.

– 30 –

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